

# Water Lines

## SDW Hotline Report

### In This Issue

[What's New](#) .....1  
[Did You Know](#) .....1  
[Monthly Trends](#) .....2  
[Calendar](#) .....3  
[Frequently Asked Qs & As](#) .....4  
[Hotline Stats](#) .....5  
[Appendix A](#) .....7

### Top Ten Topics

Topic	Questions (phone & e-mail)	Percent of Total* Questions
Local Drinking Water Quality	182	11
Tap Water Testing	143**	8
Coliforms	91	5
CCR	87	5
Lead	83	5
Home Water Treatment Units	73	4
Public Notification	70	4
Household Wells	67	4
Other Background	66	4
Other EPA	66	4

\*A total of 1,700 questions were answered by the Hotline (via telephone and e-mail) in October 2003.

\*\*Citizens who obtain their drinking water from private household wells asked 14 percent of the tap water testing questions.

Calls	E-mails	Total***
1,153	231	1,384

\*\*\*A single call or e-mail may generate multiple questions.

Published Monthly

See past reports at

<http://intranet.epa.gov/ow/hotline>

Safe Drinking Water Hotline: National Toll-free No.: (800) 426-4791 or (877) EPAWATER

For More Information Contact:  
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(202) 564-4621

Operated by Booz Allen Hamilton  
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## What's New

### New Publications:

- Water Watchers, Helping to Protect Your Local Water System, EPA810-F-03-006, is now available at [www.epa.gov/safewater/security/flyers/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/security/flyers/index.html) or by emailing requests for hard copies to [outreach.team@epa.gov](mailto:outreach.team@epa.gov).
- Top Ten List: Water Supply Emergency Preparedness and Security for Law Enforcement, poster, EPA901-H-03-002 is now available at [www.epa.gov/safewater/security/flyers/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/security/flyers/index.html) or by emailing requests for hard copies to [outreach.team@epa.gov](mailto:outreach.team@epa.gov).
- Water Security and You, local media drop in article, is now available to download at [www.epa.gov/safewater/security/flyers/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/security/flyers/index.html).
- Top Ten List: Water Supply Emergency Preparedness and Security for Law Enforcement, visor card, EPA901-R-02-001, is applicable to Region 1 states only. Download at [www.epa.gov/safewater/security/flyers/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/security/flyers/index.html). Order at [www.epa.gov/nc/eo/drinkwater/dw-security.html](http://www.epa.gov/nc/eo/drinkwater/dw-security.html).
- WaterHealthConnection.org: Website for Health Care Providers on Water Terrorism Preparedness, EPA817-F-03-002, is now available to download at [www.epa.gov/safewater/security/flyers/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/security/flyers/index.html).
- Water Security Progress and Resources, EPA817-F-03-001, is now available to download at [www.epa.gov/safewater/security/flyers/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/security/flyers/index.html).

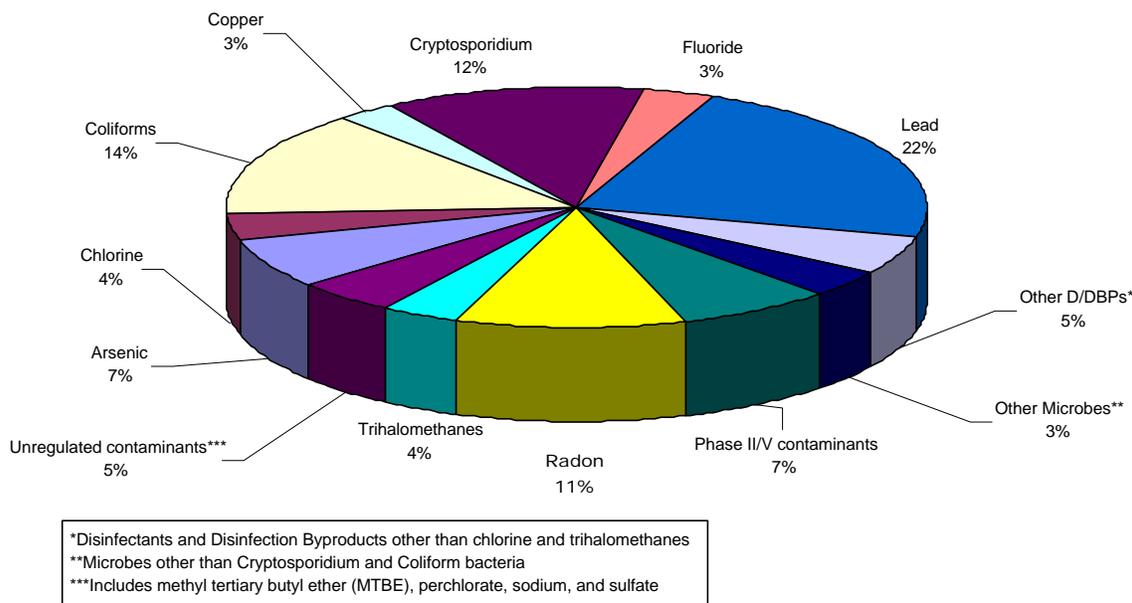
## Did You Know?

Individuals living in homes and mobile homes are more likely to receive consumer confidence reports, while those living in apartments, townhomes, or condominiums were half as likely to see reports.

(Analysis and Findings of The Gallup Organization's Drinking Water Customer Satisfaction Survey, EPA816-K-03-005, August 6, 2003)

## Monthly Trends

In previous editions of Water Lines, the Safe Drinking Water Hotline has presented series of frequently asked questions and answers relating to a specific contaminant or contaminant group regulated under the Safe Drinking Water Act. These special series provide a consolidated source of information to better address callers' most common concerns. In an effort to continue these special series, the Hotline staff examined the percentage of questions asked about specific contaminants or contaminant groups during the recently completed fiscal year (FY) 2002. The analysis revealed that questions about radon, which has no federal regulatory standard, made up 11 percent of the total questions received during FY 2002 (see chart below). People contacting the Hotline about radon generally have similar questions, but because there is no standard, guidance about radon in drinking water is limited and difficult to find. To better serve callers, the Hotline has consolidated information about radon in drinking water and designed several questions and answers on the most frequently asked radon topics.



**Q:** What is radon?

**A:** Radon is a naturally occurring, colorless, odorless, tasteless gas. It is formed from the radioactive decay of uranium in the ground (*Radon in Drinking Water: Questions and Answers*, EPA815-F-99-007, October 1999). A radon fact sheet is available at the following URL: [www.epa.gov/safewater/radon/qa1.html](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/radon/qa1.html)

**Q:** How is radon in my drinking water related to radon in indoor air?

**A:** Low levels of uranium and its decay products occur widely in the earth's crust, and thus radon is being continually generated. A portion of radon released through radioactive decay dissolves in ground water. When water that contains radon is exposed to the air, the radon will release. If ground water is supplied to a house as a source of drinking water, radon may be released into the air of the house through water uses such as

cooking, showering, and washing dishes (64 FR 59246, 59248; November 2, 1999). Additional information about radon in drinking water is available in the November 2, 1999 proposed rule at the following URL: [www.epa.gov/safewater/radon/proposal.html](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/radon/proposal.html)

**Q:** My drinking water comes from a reservoir. Do I need to be concerned about radon in my drinking water?

**A:** Radon is only a concern if your drinking water comes from underground sources. If radon is contained in water that comes from a surface water source, such as a lake or river, it is generally released into the air before reaching your water supplier or home (*Radon in Drinking Water: Questions and Answers*, EPA815-F-99-007, October 1999).

**Q:** Is radon in my drinking water a health concern?

**A:** Over the course of a lifetime, consumption of drinking water containing radon can lead to an increased risk of internal organ cancers, primarily stomach cancer. Also, breathing radon released to the air from household water uses can increase the risk of lung cancer. However, radon in drinking water generally contributes a very small part (i.e., about 1-2 percent) of total radon exposure from indoor air (64 FR 59246, 59248; November 2, 1999). Additional information about radon in indoor air is available from the EPA National Radon Hotline at (800) 767-7236.

**Q:** Does the Safe Drinking Water Act regulate radon?

**A:** There is currently no federally enforced drinking water standard for radon (*Radon in Drinking Water: Questions and Answers*, EPA815-F-99-007, October 1999). EPA proposed regulations to reduce the public health risks associated with radon in air and water on November 2, 1999. According to the Spring 2003 Regulatory Agenda, the current timeframe for final action on the Radon Proposed Rule is December 2004 (68 FR 30942, 31107; May 27, 2003).

**Q:** My drinking water tested high for radon. How can I treat my water to remove it?

**A:** The most effective treatment device to remove radon from drinking water is a point-of-entry (POE) device. A POE device removes contaminants immediately before they enter your home (*Radon in Drinking Water: Questions and Answers*, EPA815-F-99-007, October 1999). There are two types of point-of-entry devices that remove radon from water:

- Granular activated carbon (GAC) filters which use activated carbon to remove the radon
- Aeration devices which bubble air through the water and carry radon gas out into the atmosphere through an exhaust fan

GAC filters tend to cost less than aeration devices; however, radioactivity collects on the filter, which may cause a handling hazard and require special disposal methods for the filter. For more information on aerators and GAC filters, you should contact two independent, non-profit organizations: NSF International at (877) 867-3435 and the Water Quality Association at (630) 505-0160.

**Calendar:**

Who?	What?	Where?	When?	More Information
EPA	Stage 1 DBPR Train The Trainer Session	Dover, DE	9/30/2003 – 10/1/2003	To register, contact the SDW Hotline
EPA	LT2ESWTR and Stage 2 DBPR Stakeholder Meeting	Teleconference	10/9/2003	For more information: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/safewater/stage2/index.html">http://www.epa.gov/safewater/stage2/index.html</a>
EPA	LT2ESWTR and Stage 2 DBPR Stakeholder Meeting	Teleconference	10/16/2003	For more information: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/safewater/stage2/index.html">http://www.epa.gov/safewater/stage2/index.html</a>
EPA	Stage 1 DBPR Train The Trainer Session	Atlanta, GA	10/22/2003 – 10/23/2003	To register, contact the SDW Hotline
EPA	Stage 1 DBPR Train The Trainer Session	Chicago, IL	10/28/2003 – 10/29/2003	To register, contact the SDW Hotline
EPA	UCMR Stakeholder Meeting	Arlington, VA	10/29/2003	
EPA	Stage 1 DBPR Train The Trainer Session	Phoenix, AZ	11/6/2003 – 11/7/2003	To register, contact the SDW Hotline
NDWAC	Contaminant Candidate List Classification Process Work Group	Washington, DC	11/13/2003 – 11/14/2003	
NDWAC	Public Meeting	Cincinnati, OH	11/19/2003	

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## Frequently Asked Qs & As

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*This section provides answers to frequently asked questions not necessarily represented in one of the Top Ten Topic categories.*

**Q:** Aldicarb, aldicarb sulfoxide, and aldicarb sulfone are listed in 40 CFR 141.61(c) with maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) of 0.003 mg/L, 0.004 mg/L, and 0.002 mg/L, respectively. When did EPA promulgate these regulations and when did they become effective?

**A:** On July 1, 1991, EPA promulgated MCLs for aldicarb, aldicarb sulfoxide, and aldicarb sulfone and established an effective date of January 1, 1993 (56 FR 30266). However, on May 27, 1992, EPA issued an administrative stay postponing the effective date for these standards (57 FR 22178). Currently, there is no new effective date for these regulations.

**Q:** The 1996 Amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) require each state to prepare and implement development strategies that will assist public water systems in acquiring and maintaining technical, managerial and financial capacity (SDWA 1420(c)(1)). Can members of the public participate in this process?

**A:** Yes. The SDWA requires each state preparing capacity development strategies to solicit public comment and advice on various strategy components, such as identifying water systems that need improvements, determining how the state will assist water systems to comply with national primary drinking water regulations, and selecting how the state will

measure progress in improving the capacity of water systems (SDWA 1420(c)(2)). States can solicit comments and advice through a variety of avenues including public hearings, written comments, or focus groups (*Information for the Public on Participating with States in Preparing Capacity Development Strategies*, EPA816-R-98-009, July 1998).

**Q:** Public water system means a system for the provision to the public of water for human consumption through pipes or, after August 5, 1998, other constructed conveyances, if such system has at least fifteen service connections or regularly services an average of at least twenty-five individuals daily at least 60 days out of the year (40 CFR 141.2). Does EPA have any guidance on what constitutes a constructed conveyance?

**A:** Constructed conveyances include any manmade conduit such as ditches, culverts, waterways, flumes, mine drains, or canals (63 FR 41940, 41941; August 5, 1998).

**Q:** Under the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002, all community water systems serving populations greater than 3,300 persons must conduct vulnerability assessments. Will EPA be approving or certifying submitted vulnerability assessments?

**A:** No. Per Susan Dolgin, EPA's Water Security Division Outreach Lead, EPA will not be approving or certifying submitted vulnerability assessments. However, EPA will ensure basic compliance with the Act by tracking the submission of vulnerability assessments, vulnerability assessment certifications, and emergency response plan certifications. EPA will also review a statistically representative sample of the submitted vulnerability assessments to ensure all applicable requirements of the Act are being met.

### EPA DISCLAIMER

Answers to questions in the Safe Drinking Water Hotline monthly report are intended to be purely informational and are based on SDWA provisions, EPA regulations, guidance, and established policy effective at the time of publication. The answers given reflect EPA staff's best judgment at the time and do not represent a final or official EPA interpretation. This report does not substitute for the applicable provisions of statutes and regulations, guidance, etc., nor is it a regulation itself. Thus, it does not impose legally-binding requirements on EPA, States, or the regulated community. An answer to a question in this report may be revised at any time to reflect EPA's revisions to existing regulations, changes in EPA's approach to interpreting its regulations or statutory authority, or for other reasons. EPA may provide a different answer to a question in this report in the future.

Also, an answer provided in this report may not apply to a particular situation based upon the circumstances. Any decisions regarding a particular case will be made based on the applicable statutes and regulations. Therefore, interested parties are free to raise questions and objections about the appropriateness of the application of an answer in this report to a particular situation, and EPA will consider whether or not the recommendations or interpretations in the answer are accurate and appropriate in that situation. The information in this report is not intended, nor can it be relied upon, to create any rights enforceable by any party in litigation with the United States.

Hotline Statistics

### Monthly Summary of Hotline Service

Total number of calls answered	1,153
Total number of e-mails received	231
Average wait time (in seconds)	0:32
Percent of calls satisfied immediately	99.9%
Percent of all calls answered in < 1 min	87.6%
Percent of callbacks answered in 5 days	100%
Percent of e-mails answered in 5 days	100%
Number of times callers were transferred to the WSC Wellcare Hotline	348
Number of times callers listened to recorded message about CCRs	289
Number of times callers listened to recorded message about local drinking water quality for PWS customers	246
Number of times callers listened to recorded message about tap water testing and quality for household well owners	169
Number of times callers listened to recorded message about tap water testing for PWS customers	346

### Comparison to Previous Year

	Calls	E-mails
October 2003	1,153	231
October 2002	2,000	360

### Top Ten Referrals

Inquiry Referred to:	Number of Referrals	Percent of Total* Referrals
1. EPA Internet	180	17
2. Local Water System	149	14
3. State PWSS	138	13
4. State Lab Certification	116	11
5. NSF/WQA/UL	81	8
6. AGWT/WSC	61	6
7. Other Hotlines	38	4
8. EPA Regions	37	4
9. Local Public Health	36	3
10. Other	31	3

*\*A total of 1,040 referrals to other resources, agencies, and organizations were provided by the Hotline in October 2003.*

### Customer Profiles

Customer	Calls	E-mails
Analytical Laboratories	29	3
Citizen - Private Well	92	35
Citizen - PWS	644	75
Consultants/Industry/Trade (DW)	81	7
Consultants/Industry/Trade (Other)	91	26
Environmental Groups	1	1
EPA	19	2
Other Federal Agency	8	8
Government, Local	5	5
Government, State	27	5
Government, Tribal	1	1
Spanish Speaking	5	0
International	1	12
Media	4	0
Medical Professional	5	0
Public Water System	72	13
Schools/University	44	38
Other	24	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,153</b>	<b>231</b>

### Daily Call Data

	Total Calls Answered	Average Wait Time mm:sec
1-October	55	00:23
2-October	42	00:26
3-October	47	00:14
6-October	62	00:56
7-October	55	01:23
8-October	55	00:20
9-October	47	00:24
10-October	49	00:31
14-October	46	00:19
15-October	50	00:22
16-October	69	00:34
17-October	46	00:35
20-October	59	00:58
21-October	50	00:23
22-October	57	00:44
23-October	53	00:20
24-October	44	00:13
27-October	59	00:35
28-October	65	00:22
29-October	62	00:21
30-October	49	00:34
31-October	32	00:17
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,153</b>	<b>00:32</b>

### Topic Categories

Category	Calls	E-mails
<b>Microbials/Disinfection Byproducts</b>		
Chlorine	13	2
Coliforms	83	8
Cryptosporidium	20	1
Disinfection/Disinfection Byproducts (Other)	15	0
Disinfection – Home Water	7	4
Other Microbials	20	1
Storage – Home Water	1	1
Surface Water Treatment (SWTR, ESWTR, LT1FBR)	49	5
Trihalomethane (THM)	2	1
<b>Inorganic Chemicals (IOC)/Synthetic Organic Chemicals (SOC)</b>		
Arsenic	21	4
Fluoride	16	5
Methyl- <i>tertiary</i> -butyl-ether (MTBE)	6	0
Perchlorate	8	5
Phase I, II & V	20	4
Sodium Monitoring	3	0
Sulfate	0	0
<b>Lead and Copper</b>		
Copper	6	1
Lead	79	4
Lead Contamination Control Act (LCCA)/Lead Ban	3	1
<b>Radionuclides</b>		
Radionuclides (Other)	14	6
Radionuclides (Radon)	21	4
<b>Secondary DW Regulations</b>		
Secondary DW Regulations	23	3
<b>SDWA Background/Overview</b>		
Definitions & Applicability	19	4
MCL List	46	6
Other Background	48	18
SDWA	21	3

Category	Calls	E-mails
Water on Tap	2	0
<b>Other DW Regulations</b>		
Analytical Methods (DW)	26	7
Contaminant Candidate List/ Drinking Water Priority List	1	0
Consumer Confidence Report (DW)	83	4
DW Primacy (PWS)	0	0
Operator (PWS) Certification	0	2
Other Drinking Water Security	34	9
Public Notification (PWS)	63	7
Security Planning Grants	1	0
State Revolving Fund (DW)	2	3
Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR)	28	0
<b>Other Drinking Water</b>		
Additives Program	2	1
Bottled Water	30	3
Complaints about PWS	39	7
Compliance & Enforcement (PWS)	12	9
Home Water Treatment Units	64	9
Infrastructure/Cap. Development	5	0
Local DW Quality	153	29
Tap Water Testing	130	13
Treatment/BATs (DW)	5	7
<b>Drinking Water Source Protection</b>		
Ground Water Rule	3	1
Sole Source Aquifer	1	0
Source Water/Wellhead Protection	15	4
UIC Program	8	0
<b>Out of Purview</b>		
Household Wells	41	26
Non-Environmental	20	14
Non-EPA Environmental	27	29
Other EPA (Programs)	44	22
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,403</b>	<b>297</b>

## SAFE DRINKING WATER HOTLINE MONTHLY REPORT

October 2003

### APPENDIX A: FEDERAL REGISTER SUMMARIES

#### NOTICES

**“Notice of Tentative Approval and Solicitation of Request for a Public Hearing for Public Water System Supervision Program Revisions for the State of West Virginia”  
October 6, 2003 (68 FR 57692)**

EPA announced that the State of West Virginia is revising its approved Public Water System Supervision Program. West Virginia has amended its Public Notification Rule and its Lead and Copper Rule to streamline requirements and reduce monitoring and reporting requirements. EPA has determined that these revisions are no less stringent than the corresponding Federal regulations. Therefore, EPA has decided to tentatively approve these program revisions. Comments or a request for a public hearing must be submitted by November 5, 2003.

**“National Primary Drinking Water Regulations: Long Term 2 Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule; Extension of Comment Period”  
October 8, 2003 (68 FR 58057)**

EPA extended by 60 days the public comment period for the proposed Long Term 2 Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule, which was published in the Federal Register on August 11, 2003 (68 FR 47640). This extended comment period will afford greater opportunity to all interested parties to review and submit comments on the proposal. Comments must be received on or before January 9, 2004.

**“National Primary Drinking Water Regulations: Stage 2 Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rule; National Primary and Secondary Drinking Water Regulations: Approval of Analytical Methods for Chemical Contaminants; Extension of Comment Period”  
October 8, 2003 (68 FR 58057)**

EPA extended by 60 days the public comment period for the proposed Stage 2 Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rule, which was published in the Federal Register on August 18, 2003 (68 FR 49548). This extended comment period will afford greater opportunity to all interested parties to review and submit comments on the proposal. Comments must be received on or before January 16, 2004.

**“Agency Information Collection Activities OMB Responses”  
October 31, 2003 (68 FR 62068)**

This document announced the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) responses to Agency clearance requests, in compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.). Specifically, the Information Collection Request (ICR), EPA ICR No. 1896.04, "Disinfectants/Disinfection by-Products, Chemical and Radionuclides Rules: Lead and Copper Rule Amendment," was approved October 17, 2003. This ICR, OMB Number 2040-0204, expires December 31, 2004. In addition, on September 30, 2003, OMB extended the expiration date of EPA ICR No. 1912.01, "National Primary Drinking Water Regulation for Lead and

Copper (Final Rule)." The expiration date for this ICR, OMB Number 2040-0210, was extended through December 31, 2003. Finally, on October 17, 2003, OMB changed the expiration date of EPA ICR No. 1912.01, "National Primary Drinking Water Regulation for Lead and Copper (Final Rule)," OMB Number 2040-0210, to October 31, 2003.